



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



WELCOME HOME CEREMONY SCHEDULED



A welcome home ceremony for 26 Soldiers with the South Dakota Army National Guard's Detachment 1, Company B, 935th Aviation Support Battalion is scheduled for Sunday, July 21, at 2 p.m. at the Army Aviation Support Facility near Rapid City Regional Airport.

The public is encouraged to attend the event as the Rapid City-based unit returned home in May after a nearly year-long deployment to the Middle East.

While deployed the unit provided aviation maintenance

and repair support for U.S. Army rotary aircraft and avionics systems.

Planned speakers for the ceremony include Gov. Krisi Noem and Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, SDNG adjutant general.

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VA OVERHAULS RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL SYMBOL POLICIES

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently revised its directives permitting religious literature, symbols and displays at VA facilities to protect religious liberty for veterans and families while ensuring inclusivity and nondiscrimination.

The move aims to simplify and clarify the department's policies governing religious symbols, and spiritual and pastoral care, which have been interpreted inconsistently at various VA facilities in recent years, resulting in unfortunate incidents that interrupted certain displays.

Effective July 3, these changes will help ensure that patrons within VA have access to religious literature and symbols at chapels as requested and protect representations of faith in publicly accessible displays at facilities throughout the department.

"We want to make sure that all of our veterans and their families feel welcome at the VA, no matter their religious beliefs. Protecting religious liberty is a key part of how we accomplish that goal," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "These important changes will bring simplicity and clarity to our policies governing religious and spiritual symbols, helping ensure we are consistently complying with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution at thousands of facilities across the department."

The new policies will:

- Allow the inclusion in appropriate circumstances of religious content in publicly accessible displays at VA facilities.
- Allow patients and their guests to request and be provided religious literature, symbols and sacred texts during visits to VA chapels and during their treatment at the VA.
- Allow the VA to accept donations of religious literature, cards and symbols at its facilities and distribute them to VA patrons under appropriate circumstances or to a patron who requests them.

The U.S. Supreme Court recently reaffirmed the important role religion plays in the lives of many Americans and its consistency with Constitutional principles. This includes the following values: a display that follows in the longstanding tradition of monuments, symbols and practices; respect and tolerance of differing views; and endeavors to achieve inclusivity and nondiscrimination.



SYMPATHIES TO THE LOESCH FAMILY

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Loesch family. We are thinking of you, wishing you hope in the midst of sorrow and comfort in the midst of pain.

Royce was a true advocate for veterans. He was a trailblazer and a voice for the American Legion. He was instrumental in securing highly rural transportation grants for transporting veterans to their medical appointments.

Royce's funeral services are as follows: visitation Wednesday evening, July 17, from 5:00 to 7:00 pm, prayer service following at 7:00 pm, and funeral service Thursday morning, July 18, at 10 am; all of which will be held at Faith Lutheran Church in Pierre (714 N. Grand).

Funeral arrangements and obituary can be found at:

<https://www.isburgfuneralchapels.com/obituary/royce-loesch>.



TAYLOR NAMED NEW SDDVA PROGRAM MANAGER



Krystal Taylor has been named the new SDDVA program manager. Taylor will be the lead on appeals, training, and education. She fills the position that was vacated by Erin Bultje.

"This promotion means so much to me," said Taylor. "I am so honored to be able to serve in an even greater capacity. I have had the opportunity to work for a great team and my mission is to make sure we keep moving forward and reaching even more veterans. During my first year at the department we took in just under 1,300 claims; last year we were just under 8,000; and this year we already have over 5,000 claims."

"I'm confident that Krystal will do an excellent job for our department and our veterans," said Heather Bullerman. "She has trained many of our VSOs and all of the claims examiners over the last six years."

VA EXTENDS AGENT ORANGE PRESUMPTION TO “BLUE WATER NAVY” VETERANS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is preparing to process Agent Orange exposure claims for [“Blue Water Navy” Veterans](#) who served offshore of the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975.

These veterans may be eligible for presumption of herbicide exposure through [Public Law 116-23, Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019](#), which was signed into law June 25, 2019, and goes into effect Jan. 1, 2020. They may also qualify for a presumption of service connection if they have a disease that is recognized as being associated with herbicide exposure.

The bipartisan Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act gives VA until Jan. 1, 2020, to begin deciding Blue Water Navy related claims. By staying claims decisions until that date, VA is complying with the law that Congress wrote and passed.

“VA is dedicated to ensuring that all veterans receive the benefits they have earned,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “We are working to ensure that we have the proper resources in place to meet the needs of our Blue Water Veteran community and minimize the impact on all Veterans filing for disability compensation.”

Blue Water Navy Veterans are encouraged to submit disability compensation claims for conditions presumed to be related to Agent Orange exposure. Veterans over age 85 or with life-threatening illnesses will have priority in claims processing.

Veterans who previously were denied for an Agent Orange related presumptive condition can file a new claim based on the change in law. Eligible survivors of deceased Blue Water Navy Veterans also may benefit from the new law and may file claims for benefits based on the Veterans’ service.

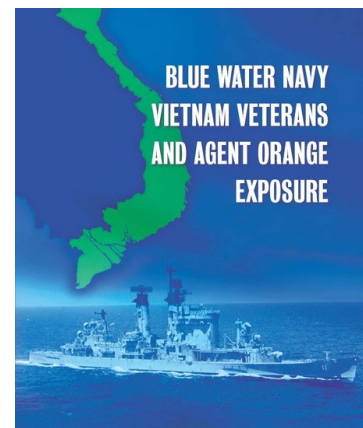
The new law affects Veterans who served on a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia, as defined in [Public Law 116-23](#). An estimated 420,000 to 560,000 Vietnam-era Veterans may be considered Blue Water Navy Veterans.

To qualify, under the new law, these Veterans must have a disease associated with herbicide exposure, as listed in [38 Code of Federal Regulations](#) section 3.309(e).

Agent Orange presumptive conditions are:

- AL amyloidosis
- Chloracne or similar acneform disease
- Chronic B-cell leukemias
- Diabetes mellitus Type 2
- Hodgkin lymphoma, formerly known as Hodgkin’s disease
- Ischemic heart disease
- Multiple myeloma

(continued on next page)



AGENT ORANGE (CONTINUED)

- Non-Hodgkin lymphoma, formerly known as Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Parkinson's disease
- Peripheral neuropathy, early-onset
- Porphyria cutanea tarda
- Prostate cancer
- Respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx or trachea)
- Soft-tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma or mesothelioma).

For more information about Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam waters (Blue Water Navy Veterans), visit <https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/navy-coast-guard-ships-vietnam/>.

Veterans seeking more information should contact their [Veterans Service Officer](#), call VA's toll-free number at 800-827-1000 or visit the VA Blue Water Navy Agent Orange [website](#).

CUSTER COUNTY OUTREACH

Custer County VSO Jana Virtue and VA partners were part of the team that participated in a great veterans outreach event over the Fourth of July.

The parade, car show, and the patriots picnic afforded them a great opportunity to reach out and assist veterans.

Veterans outreach participants included: Jeff Gorr, Rapid City Mobile Vet Center; Cheryl Adamson, SDNG Citizen Soldier for Life Program; Jana Virtue, Custer County VSO; Betty Tye, VA Veteran Health Information Exchange Coordinator; and Michelle Hough, VA Suicide Prevention Outreach and Education.



SANFORD HEALTH VETERANS SCHOLARSHIPS

Sanford Health is accepting applications for four \$5,000 scholarships awarded annually to Veterans, Guard/Reserve members or active duty military service members who have demonstrated leadership and commitment in their community.

The Sanford Health Military and Veteran Scholarship honors those who have furthered their own progress and enriched the lives of others, especially in service, academics and community involvement.

Interested students should download and complete the application, which is due Aug. 31.

Applicants must be a veteran, Guard/Reserve or active-duty military service member and a full-time student enrolled in a degree seeking higher education institution or pursuing a bachelor's, graduate or professional degree from an accredited U.S.-based institution of higher education. They must also have at least one full year of education remaining. For more information, visit:

<https://news.sanfordhealth.org/news/sanford-health-offering-5000-scholarship-to-veterans/>.



UVCT AND OYATE CDFI FORM PARTNERSHIP

United Veterans Construction Team, LLC and the Oyate Community Development Financial Institution have formed a new partnership via the organization lending opportunities. This partnership will benefit veterans on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation.

UVCT is a 100% owned and operated Veteran business located on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in Wakpala District.



USS SOUTH DAKOTA RIDE ACROSS SOUTH DAKOTA

The “USS SOUTH DAKOTA Ride Across South Dakota” will take place July 14-15, 2019! Ten Sailors from SSN 790, including Commanding Officer Craig Litty and Chief of the Boat Adam Goulas, will take part in the event. All motorcyclists are welcome to join the ride.

The sailors will be riding the Commemorative USS SOUTH DAKOTA (SSN 790) 2018 Harley-Davidson Street Glide. This one-of-a-kind bike was donated by Harley-Davidson Motor Company to celebrate South Dakota’s namesake vessel. J&L Harley-Davidson of Sioux Falls is the sponsoring dealership and along with Black Hills Harley-Davidson will ensure the bike is maintained over the next thirty years. South Dakota artist Mickey Harris created and painted the bike, which honors the history of Battleship SOUTH DAKOTA and commemorates Submarine SOUTH DAKOTA. The sailors will take turns riding the USS SD H-D Street Glide and other Harley-Davidson motorcycles provided by J&L H-D and Black Hills H-D.

The ride will officially begin at 8:00 am on Sunday, July 14, at the Battleship USS SOUTH DAKOTA (BB 57) Memorial in Sioux Falls. Coffee and donuts will be available. Captain Diane Diekman, USN (Ret), President of the BB 57 Memorial, will welcome the sailors and share some of the history of Battleship SOUTH DAKOTA, one of the greatest warships in the Navy’s long history.



Riders will depart the BB 57 Memorial at 9:00 am for the Corn Palace in Mitchell. The murals on this year’s Corn Palace are a “Salute to Military” and include corn murals of Battleship SOUTH DAKOTA and Submarine SOUTH DAKOTA. The riders will tour the Corn Palace and have lunch in Mitchell. The ride departs Mitchell at 1:30 pm for Pierre, where riders will stay overnight. The ride will make a stop for fuel in Chamberlain.

Participants should make their own arrangements for hotels or camping with many options in the Pierre/Ft. Pierre area.

On Monday, July 15, the ride will resume at 9:00 am (CT) at the State Capitol in Pierre. Motorcyclists will head to Badlands National Park off of Interstate 90. The ride will arrive in Wall at noon for lunch. At 2:00 pm (MT), the ride will depart Wall for Black Hills H-D in Rapid City and expect to arrive at the dealership about 3:00 pm (MT). Riders will depart Black Hills H-D at 4:00 pm (MT) for Sturgis.

At 5:00 pm (MT) on Monday, July 15, the Sturgis Motorcycle Museum and Motorcycle Hall of Fame will welcome the riders and induct the Commemorative USS SOUTH DAKOTA (SSN 790) 2018 Harley-Davidson Street Glide into the museum! The bike will be on permanent display and also maintained in running condition.

Any sailor assigned to SSN 790 is welcome to check the bike out of the museum and ride it anywhere in the State of South Dakota. Plankowners of SSN 790 have lifetime rights to ride the motorcycle.

DQ GRILL AND CHILL SUPPORT MIDWEST HONOR FLIGHT

Dairy Queen Grill and Chills in Eagle Butte, Martin, Pierre, Vermillion, and Winner organized and conducted a fundraiser to support Midwest Honor Flight in their mission to transport America's Veterans to Washington, DC to visit the memorials dedicated to honor the service and sacrifices of veterans.

Collectively, these communities raised \$1,728 for Midwest Honor Flight.

Special thanks to the Grill and Chills and their customers for their support of this great cause!



SFVAHCS SHOW AND SHINE

The Sioux Falls VA Health Care System will hold their 19th annual VA Show and Shine Car Show in Sioux Falls on Wednesday, August 14.

The Show and Shine will be held on the SFVAHCS Campus (2501 W. 22nd Street) in Sioux Falls from 5:30 pm—8:30 pm (CT).



SRST VETERANS CEMETERY DEDICATION



VA U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

PRESENTATION OF THE ALL NATIONS VETERANS CEMETERY STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE

28 July 2019 – 1700 hrs (5pm CST)

Wakpala School
Wakpala, South Dakota

Post Colors	Brought–Brown Otter–Village Center American Legion Post 82	1700
Flag Song	Lakeside Singers	
Honor Song		
Pledge of Allegiance	David Harrison, Veteran Veterans Service Officer	
Invocation	Thomas Hlavinka, Veteran Warrior Lodge Residential Home	1715
Welcome	Jay Shillingstad, Veteran CEO Wakpala School	1720
	Mike Faith, Chairman Standing Rock Sioux Tribe	
CONGRESS	SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS R-SD	
Leadership	Damon Gray Eagle, Veteran	1735
History and Overview of Cemetery	Manaja Hill, Veteran Veterans Service Officer	1745
VA Cemetery Programs/ State & Tribal Grant Program	George Eisenbach, Veteran Director-VA Cemetery Programs	1750
Cemetery Design and Construction Wyss & Assoc. and Scull Const.	Chris Wehrle & Rod Cockram, Veteran	1805
Origin and Design of Booklet	Tim Mentz, Cultural Consultant	1820
Closing	Manaja Hill, Veterans Service Officer	1835
Retire Colors	Brought –Brown Otter-Village Center Post 82	1840
Honor Song	Lakeside Singers	



VA | U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

DEDICATION OF THE ALL NATIONS VETERANS CEMETERY STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE

29 July 2019 – 1000 hrs.
10191 Highway 6
McLaughlin, SD 57642

Post Colors	Color Guard Garry Weasel, Veteran	1000
Flag Song	Iron Bull	
Pledge of Allegiance	Kevin Jamerson, Veteran	
Fly Over	LTC Jonathan Slinkard, 28 th OSS Commander US AIRFORCE	1020
Pipe Ceremony	Elliott Ward, Veteran Emergency Manager	1025
Welcome	Mike Faith, Chairman Standing Rock Sioux Tribe	1035
POW – MIA Table	Tamara Harrison, Veteran	1040
History and Overview of Cemetery	Manaja Hill, Veteran Veterans Service Officer	1045
Congressional Comments	Sen. Hoven, R-ND Sen. Kramer, R-ND Rep. Anderson, R-ND Sen. Thune, R-SD Sen. Rounds, R-SD Rep. Johnson, R-SD	1050
VA Cemetery Programs/ State & Tribal Grant Programs	George Eisenbach, Veteran Director-VA Cemetery Programs	1120
Speakers	MONTANA, Joseph, US Army, Post 82 LOESCH, Justin, US ARNG, Post 4 EDWARDS, Sparky, US Army, BIA-LE JAMERSON, Frank, US Navy, Post 239	1135
Dedication of Cemetery	Mike Faith, Chairman Standing Rock Sioux Tribe	1150
Taps	Honor Guard	
Honor Song	Iron Bull	
Meal	Community	1200

Jul 14-15—USS SD Ride Across SD
Jul 17—South Dakota Veterans Council—PVA Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
Jul 19-21—"Last Out" Performance—Thomas H. Craig Center for the Performing Arts—Vermillion High School—
Show times 8:00 pm (CT) on 19-20 and 2:00 pm (CT) on 21st
Jul 20—PVA 5th Annual Poker Run—Thirsty Duck Bar and Grill (945 S. Marion Road)—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
Jul 20—SD American Legion Auxiliary State President Homecoming—United Methodist Church—Dell Rapids—2:00
pm (CT)
Jul 20-24—National VFW Convention—Orlando, FL
Jul 20—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street)—9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)
Jul 20—Welcome Home for SDNG Det 1 Company B Aviation Support Battalion—Army Aviation Support Facility
Near Rapid City Regional Airport—2:00 pm (MT)
Jul 27—SDNG Deployment Ceremony for the 152nd Combat Sustainment—Riggs High School—Pierre—2:00 pm (CT)
Jul 29—All Nations Veterans Cemetery Dedication—McLaughlin (10191 Highway 6)—10:00 am (CT)
Aug 2—American Legion Highway 281 Centennial Run (ND/SD Border to SD/NE Border)
Aug 2—CRST Dedication of Veterans Memorial Park—Eagle Butte (E. HWY 212)—3:00 pm (CT)
Aug 3-6—DAV National Convention—Orlando, FL
Aug 14—Turner County Fair Veterans Recognition—3:00—5:00 pm (CT)
Aug 14—SFVAHCS Show and Shine—SFVAHCS Campus—5:30—8:30 pm (CT)
Aug 17—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street)—9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)
Aug 17-18—Sioux Falls Air Show
Aug 24—Wine and Gala Auction (MidWest Honor Flight Benefit)—Calico Skies Winery
Aug 26—Sioux Falls Barrel House (MidWest Honor Flight Benefit—10% all day to MWHF)—4701 E 54th Street
Aug 29—Veterans Day at the Fair
Aug 26-29—SDDVA Benefit School
Aug 31—15th Annual 727th Transportation/DAV Poker Run—Swiftel Center—Brookings
Sep 9—SD State Veterans Cemetery Groundbreaking—10:00 am (CT)
Sep 21—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street)—9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)
Sep 21—Davison County Veterans Wellness and Benefit Fair—Mitchell Corn Palace—8:00 am—4:30 pm (CT)
Sep 21-22—SD American Legion Golf Tournament—Hartford Golf Course
Nov 2—Second Annual Hangar Dance (MidWest Honor Flight Benefit)—Mid America Museum of Aviation—
Sioux City, IA—7:00 pm (CT)



Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
South Dakota Department of the Military <http://military.sd.gov>
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>
Soldiers and Sailors Building - 425 E Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-8242
E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us

